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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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ST. PAUL'S CREED.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." —Phil. iv., 8.

These were among the very last words that were penned by the Apostle Paul. He was in prison, and he wrote them with a manacled hand, chained to a soldier, rejoicing that even his bonds were blest, and that the heroism of his suffering made many bold to speak the truth of Christ, even in the household of the despot who soon sought and took his life; so that this light breaks out from the darkness of the dungeon.

How Paul's last days were spent we know not. There was no decline by reason of sickness. The waste, the decay, we are spared an account of from him. He rises as a spirit burning with the most noble sentiments, with the most heroic feelings, and with a life astonishing by its disinterestedness, by its fervor, by its wonderful success—a life which did not end with the falling of the body; for he rose to a nobler sphere, to join in higher labors; and the truths which he had uttered came on down through the generations which followed. There never have been any brighter scenes than those through which the apostle Paul passed; and there has never been a man who, on so high a level of enthusiastic sentiment, has equaled or been fit to be likened to him. Aside from Christ, he is

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the one shining light of the New Testament dispensation, standing there as Moses stood in the Old Testament dispensation. Though the Jews, running far back in their thoughts toward antiquity, spoke evermore with veneration of the founders of their nation—Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob—and not improperly; yet all these great names are mere shadows. They have left no special memorial—no great truth which they bore and rounded out. They are landmarks very much as those stone-heap witnesses were, which the Israelites were accustomed to build on great occasions. Moses had a creative nature, and he left institutions and laws and methods which have made the world wiser and better to this day; but John and Paul are the two natures of the New Testament, who, inflamed by Jesus, were made to be significantly his great forces. John represents the interior and thoughtful and undemonstrative manhood; but, if he be larger and nobler in some respects, yet, after all, his revelation to the world as an active force is not so great as that of Paul. John may be, in and of himself, perhaps, deeper and higher; but as a regenerating power, acting upon the world, Paul, who was made up of profound personal experience, with an intense practical nature, far transcends John in his sphere, in the width of it, and in its force.

It is quite noticeable that he who has developed in modern times, on religious grounds, the doctrine of the sacredness of the individual man, or the doctrine of the nobility of manhood, should himself have been brought up, I might almost say, a besotted Pharisee. A Pharisee is one who worships instruments. Whoever believes that churches, or books, or institutions, or customs, are more valuable than men is a Pharisee; and, on the other hand, whoever believes that man is transcendently more valuable than his institutions is a Paulist—that is to say, he is a Christman, or Christian. For this idea was borrowed by the apostle Paul from Jesus, who, never disdaining institutions, never disdaining the customs of his country, was adhered to enthusiastically by the common people, because he so well represented to them the noblest notion of a Jew. He was a servant to their sabbaths and synagogues and modes of worship; and yet, after all, through

his obedience to these things, there shone out in him, more and more to the end, the conception that the unit of value in the universe is living intelligence. Man makes society; man fashions communities; man frames institutions; but his value does not depend upon what he does in the framing of institutions. He is not like a stone that goes into a wall, and helps to build a palace or a fort, and is good for nothing except as the fort or the palace is good. He is not like a brick, compressed, and made shapely, in order that it may be laid just so with line and trowel. He is a living being, in and of himself; and all society, all religion, all churches, all institutions, come as servants to him, who is the master of them, who is the one for whom they were created, and who is independent of them—or can be, or ought to be, if he is not. It is because these things help a man to measure manliness, it is because they bring in their hand that which makes him broader and stronger and richer, that they are valuable to him; and the moment they cease to do that he ceases to be amenable to them.

Just as soon as this large conception of the liberty of manhood, of the liberty wherewith Christ makes men free, of the liberty which all men enter into when they are by the Divine Spirit brought into line, not in their lower animal nature, but in their reason, in their moral sentiments, and in that intuition which comes from the higher feelings—just as soon as this large conception of liberty takes possession of a man, and he lives according to it, he becomes free. For whatever things men are accustomed to do because the law says they shall, under the influence of this new conception they do because they like to do them. They act voluntarily. It is pleasanter for them to do right than to do wrong, just as it is pleasanter for a musician to make chords than to make discords.

A man may rise to a plane where he speaks the truth because it is sweeter to speak the truth than to speak falsehood. A man may be honest because he feels that honesty is intrinsically better to him than dishonesty. And so, in every place, that which men do by law and by rule, they come at last to do by volition. In the highest reach of which

we have any notion upon earth, men do things involuntarily and automatically.

Paul was one, then, who cared for nothing so much as for that ennobled manhood which is the result of the divine influence upon the human soul. The inflections in his writings which dissuade from every form of evil, and exhort to every form of good, are simply marvelous. Men have read those writings in order to frame theologies—and they have had business on hand to do that. It has been assumed, generally, that out of the New Testament decrees—at least so far as the whole will of God is concerned—you can frame the outlines of the divine government, of the divine attributes, and of the divine purposes, as well as the outcome of the divine economy in time. Men have supposed that from the New Testament should be extracted these great elements; and they have been busy in attempting to mark them out; whereas that which the New Testament is remarkable for, that which it has been to a very large extent recognized and employed as being,—is that it deals with the formation of a beautiful, noble manhood. Paul was the apostle of manhood,—manhood in Christ Jesus,—he being both the model and the inspiration.

I need not stop to read you the many passages which abound everywhere touching this matter.

Thus these developments have in them the method of making known the divine nature. Hitherto the revelation of God had been autocratic; sometimes it had been despotic, supreme, sovereign, and terrible; but in the New Testament, without losing sight of the fact that God is supreme and sovereign, the especial development is that of loveliness; and the influence of the divine nature upon the soul, as shown forth in the New Testament, is to inspire it with all forms of manliness. In other words, it is for the sake of *shaping men into divinity*, and not for the sake of *bringing them to worship divinity*, that God is revealed in the teachings of the New Testament, and especially in the writings of the Apostle Paul. In so far as the knowledge of God inspires reverence, reverence itself helps to build up the inward being, and to make man nobler; and so far it is useful; but the main con-

ception of the divine nature found in the New Testament is that from the reflection of its power upon men they shall become nobles, priests, kings. You do not strike the apostolic line of vision, you do not get the view which the apostle had, from his stand-point, until you gain a conception of the divine nature which tends to inspire in men all confidence, all hope, all admiration, all trust, and every endeavor at imitation.

The conception, therefore, of a God that is mighty, and afar off, the great Engineer and Architect, is not the New Testament conception. Although he is Engineer and Architect, and although those laws which are irresistible and universal, and are moving through time and space, and shaping matter, are from him, yet there is just the same difference between the interior disposition of God and this outward manifestation of power, that there is between a man showing physical strength and a man showing spiritual dispositions. The New Testament conception of the disposition of God is distinctively that which makes him *the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely*—although that phrase itself is one of those welcome fore-gleams of the later light, which shoot out here and there from the Old Testament.

Men, in this point of view, according to the apostle, are of more importance than institutions. As it is declared by the Lord, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." The Bible was made for man, and not man for the Bible. The church was made for man, and not man for the church. The teacher was ordained for the sake of men, and not men for the sake of the teacher. All ordinances are to be helps and benefits to men, and not masters or rulers over them. These things were all designed, not to take away from but to enlarge and ennoble the individual. The whole drift of the New Testament is to make a man free by making him better; by drawing him up in the only direction in which there is legitimate growth—toward the higher elements that are in his nature; and when men come to power and manhood in that direction they find themselves free from everything except the dominion of love—and that is the only bondage in this world which any man can afford to have.

The chains which love imposes are honors: all others are degradations.

The whole tendency of the New Testament, then, is to inspire largeness of being, freedom of nature, independence of life, as fast as men can achieve it by broadening their powers and becoming good. All other things are instruments, and are ordained to be subject to man's choices.

But is not a man obliged to keep Sunday? It is better that a man should have one day in seven for rest, and that he should give to the household and to moral culture this portion of his time; but is a man bound, under the apostolic injunction, to observe days, sabbaths, and new moons, or is he free?

He who can make manhood without instruments is perfectly at liberty to make manhood without instruments. If a man would be pure, and truth-loving, and beautiful, and full of honor, and full of every scintillation of virtue, is he not bound to observe church economies? No. May men be Christians outside of a church? Would to God that they would be! Well, if a man becomes a Christian outside of a church must he not come into it? If he wishes to—not otherwise.

We think it a well-established fact, that if a man does go to school it will be easier for him to learn; but if he chooses to learn outside of the school he is at liberty to do it. We want him to have intelligence; and we point out to him the ways in which he may obtain it; and undoubtedly they are the best ways for the community at large; but nobody is obliged, because he wishes education, to go first to the common school, and then to the academy, and then to the college, and then to the professional school. A man may possibly be a practical physician without ever having gone into any school. A man can, perhaps, be an able and efficient lawyer without having studied law under an experienced lawyer in an office. A man can be a successful merchant without having had instruction in a counting-house; though none of these possibilities are probable. Such places for training are convenient and desirable, and men are to be urged to go through them, because the presumption, drawn

from experience, is against his succeeding without them ; but if any man can prosper without them he is under no obligation to avail himself of them.

It is a great help for a man who is sick or weak to carry a staff ; but when he gets well or strong it is not necessary for him to carry a staff. If a man can go without crutches, let him not despise them ; and if a man is obliged to carry crutches, (as most of us are!) let him not blame the man for not carrying them who does not need them.

In regard to ordinances, those from which you can abstract benefit, those which do you good, observe. If ordinances come to you and say, "What can we do for you?" and you see nothing that they can do for you, they retire. They are not obligatory on you. No ecclesiastical regulation, no church ordination, no system of days, no philosophy of religion, has power to bind a man that has been made free, or that is seeking to be made free, by the action of the Holy Ghost upon his soul ; by the inflammation of that which is highest and best in him ; for he is God's son, and therefore he has the freedom of the universe, and is in bondage to none. In Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free." And ordinances are as nothing unless they serve the weaknesses of men. If a man can get along without them better than with them he is at liberty to do it ; but in dispensing with them he is not to despise religion ; for religion does not consist in being a member of a church, or reciting the catechism, or repeating so much Scripture : it is a living quality in the living man. It is the right exercise of right feelings all the time, toward God and toward men.

I do not say this because I wish to take away from you the thought of the great advantage of church economies. I value them. So do I value the friendly intercourse of my neighbors, whom I love. I go into their houses with great pleasure. But suppose there should be an ordinance passed that, once a week, I must visit A, B, and C, or suffer a penalty ? It would take away all the charm of visiting them ; and I would say, "I won't !" I go to see them because I am benefited by going, and not because I am obliged to go ; and I

will go just as long as I am benefited, because I desire to, and not from any exterior compulsion.

Now I believe that churches do good to men—they ought to, at any rate. Why? Simply because all feelings tend to strengthen themselves by coming together. Whenever men wish to act with the greatest facility and effect in the line of art, they coalesce, and form a stream of influences. In politics, men combine, and mighty influences are developed by combination. In friendships, in all the relations of man with man, it is the coalescence of feeling that deepens the channel, and widens the river, and increases the on-flow. And in religion it is precisely the same. It is easier for men to fire themselves with sacred enthusiasm together than separate. One man trying to be enthusiastic alone is like one stick of wood trying to burn alone; two men are like two sticks of wood; three are like three; and four will burn in spite of you. When men come together they kindle each other; and that is good enough reason why they should come together. You come together, not because you must, but because you think it best.

And so it should be in churches, though in many churches it is not so. Often when men go into a church they find a great many rules and regulations, a great many prohibitions and permissions, a great many restraints of their freedom. They find everything arranged and fixed. They find a great many things that have been handed down from antiquity. They find a great many duties and obligations imposed upon them. They find themselves under the dominion of systems and economies. They find themselves tied up in many ways. It is said to them, "You must not do this, and you must do that; you must not go here, and you may go there; you are responsible for these things and for those." The church, as it is often administered, is webbed by various provisions which take away the liberty of the individual. It does all his thinking for him, and arranges all his religious work for him. It tells him what he shall do in every hour of the day. It takes away the autonomy and spontaneity of his nature. It relieves him of the responsibility of developing his own thoughts and feelings, and of taking care of his own life. In other

words, it makes spiritual eunuchs of men, divesting them of their vital manhood. Under such circumstances it is not a benefit.

I have a receipt. The world has been going wrong all the time, and men have been thieves, and debauchees, and drunkards; and I know how I am going to stop it. I am going to put up enormous buildings, full of cells; and I am going to take every man, and place him in one of those cells, and turn the key on him, so that he cannot get out. Then he will not have anything to drink or to steal; there will be no one for him to harm; he will not be able to do any mischief. In that way I will reform the whole community. When they are shut up so that they cannot do anything, how harmless they will be!—and how *worthless!*

The supreme conception of manhood is that of a vital spirit, full of voluntary action; full of unrestrained will; full of thought, flying high and free as the winds fly, and profuse as the flowers of spring. God's spirit developes a thousand times more bountifully from the human soil than the sun does from the natural soil, all vines, all shrubs, all high-growing trees, all lowly plants, grass, moss, everything in its place, and of its kind.

Now, it is this multifarious spontaneity in man that constitutes the grandeur of manhood; and it is this spontaneity that men try to repress by institutions, by denominations, by sects, by authority in its different forms, hewing off the branches here and there. But liberty is one of the signs of Christianity; by as much as a man is a craven, and trembles before his priest, by so much is he less a Christian. By as much as a man is superstitious about Sundays, about ordinances, about forms and ceremonies, by so much is his Christian character weakened. He that loves God until he fears nothing is the typical Christian—the ideal man; and out of him proceed all kindness, all truth, all love, all faith, all self-respect, all needful restraint, all things that go to make him a full man, moving in the ranks of society easily and naturally.

Now, what men attempt to do by the pressure of customs, by the methods of absolute authority, that the apostle under-

stood perfectly well could be better done by our being *men in Christ Jesus.*

When I was in Washington the other day, I went into the National Conservatory; and there I saw all tropical plants strong and growing. For instance, I saw canes, that, springing from the ground, had run up to the very glass. I climbed the winding stairs in the center, and found that as soon as the trees had reached to a certain height they could not go any further. Why? Because the Conservatory must be preserved, and the trees had to be cut back, lest they should break the glass. In order to save the Conservatory they were obliged to crop in the trees.

It is very much so with churches. They let men grow according to the limits of the conservatory. When a man has grown so tall that the glass is in danger, they cut him in. But God's conception is that men shall grow with a free soil, and with free air, to the uttermost limit and bound. According to God's conception, in freedom there is safety, and in freedom there is the only true conservatism, and the only perfect manhood.

You will perhaps ask me when I am coming to my text. That is the last thing I am coming to in this discourse.

I remark once more, that religion is not to be considered as comprised in its formulas and in its instruments. Religion is only another name for certain states and conditions of living human intelligence.

I have on my shelves *Lindley's Vegetable Kingdom.* Do you suppose, because I have in that one volume an account of all known trees and vegetables, that I have those trees and vegetables themselves in my book-case? I have a book which points to them; but it does not contain them. And do you suppose that religion is in the New Testament, or in any catechism, or in any confession of faith? These things contain words that point to religion; but the thing itself is outside of books. If it is any where, it is in men. It never can be compressed into a formula. Although you can describe a tree, no description is the tree; and religion cannot be compressed into a description. It is a development in the human soul. No formula can do more than point to it. It must be

searched for outside of the formula. That to which all doctrines and all teachings refer must be looked for in the living realities of life.

Again, I remark that the new views which arise in the progress of civilization, in the development of scientific knowledge, in the refinement of life, in the advancement of liberty, are to be considered neither as outside of Christianity, nor as antagonistic to it. I strike at that most miserable and wretched fallacy, that Christianity is a letter, or that it is a book, or that it is a system of doctrines. I say that Christianity is manhood developed by the divine Spirit to its uttermost bounds, for the life that now is, and for the life that is to come; and I aver that whatever belongs to man acting in normal relations, whatever, in subsequent times, may come, of knowledge, of will, of development, of beauty, of skill, of rare modes of life, is an element of Christianity.

Read, now, our text, in the light of these remarks:

"Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

So, then, I boldly say that I hail the thinkers of every school of philosophy who are making progress in the development of truth. Let men search for hidden records—for the footsteps of God on the globe. Let men make discoveries in the stellar depths. Let men develop new economies and philosophies. Let men open up other realms of knowledge. Let whatever there may be in the sphere of human society be disclosed. It does not follow that it is not in harmony with religion because it is not a part of that which is hereditary and conventional. Christianity in its nature is interminable, universal, unfathomable. There is no end to it. No man can express it in books of prose or verse. No man can give the statistics of it. Whatever expansion the human soul is capable of; whatever may be done in the household that is more beautiful; whatever may take place in the State that is more noble—that belongs to Christianity, which is sanctified, divine manhood in men. There is no antagonism between religion and the discoveries that are being made, so far as they

are true developments. Whatever elements go to make men deeper, higher, wider; whatever enlarges man's horizon; whatever makes him an heir of two worlds, and worthy to be made a king, not by an outward crown, but by a crown of the heart; whatever makes him more like God, and more deserving of the love of God—all of that belongs to Christianity; and the unexpressed part of Christianity is a thousand times more than that which has been expressed. Christianity is the alphabet, and life is the literature which springs from that alphabet.

Many of the fears of men, therefore, are groundless, in regard to the results of scientific investigation. Men say, "If you develop this or that doctrine original sin will go under." I would to God that it might! "If you develop Darwinism, or Herbert Spencerism, or the system of this, that, or the other school, where is your faith?" Any faith that can be upset by two men, or by twenty, I do not want nor care for. Nothing can undermine Christianity if it means the development of humanity, and such a love of God in Christ Jesus as shall draw all hearts toward the truth, and govern the animalism in them, and awaken their higher sentiments, and make the household more noble and beautiful, and make the state grander for peace, equity, liberty.

Everything that tends to enlarge manhood in man, as a child of God, and not as his own God, or as God in himself, I hail; and although modern discoveries and developments may put on the guises of opposition or dissent, although they may even style themselves *infidel*, I see that under a kindly providence they are all working for good; and I rejoice in them. Though I highly value the direct efforts which are made to lead men to repent of evil and forsake it, and take hold of virtue and a high spiritual life; though I conceive that work to be the noblest and the richest and highest of earthly employments; though I believe that a true, wholehearted, and joyous following of what we now call a religious life is the highest plane of earthly spiritual experience; yet I discern that in the times to come *whatsoever* is just, whatsoever is pure, whatsoever is of good report, whatsoever men instinctively believe to be noble, and honorable, and

true, and right, will be recognized as belonging to Christianity.

And so, when the last times, the teleologic period, shall come, then He that shall descend and come will not come in any ecclesiastical guise. The priest that looks for Christ's coming, when the new earth and the new heaven shall appear, will not alone see him. The orator will see him ; the artist will see him ; the singer will see him ; the mechanic, working on fine things for fine purposes, will see him. There will be, in the descent of Christ, when we take in the full scope of his nature, something that will represent the best things of all sides of the human mind ; of all sides of the human economy ; of all sides of human society ; and the new heaven and the new earth will be a realm in which man, being a son of man no longer, shall strike upward, and rise until he is the king's son—and God in love is only King.

May God give to us this largeness of thought, this liberty, this aspiration, this intuition, until we reach the land where even intuition shall be lost, and where we shall be inspired, by the spirit in us and about us, with blessed fruition and joy, forever and forever!

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We bless thee, our Father, that thou hast drawn us toward thyself with growing knowledge; that we are not left in the low estate in which we were born, but that thou hast, by thine influence, lifted upon us more and more the rising light. Thou art the All-governing; and thou art more—thou art He that is forming and educating the race; and still thou art more—thou art the Redeemer of men, and art bringing them to virtue out of their sin and transgression, by fear and by hope; and yet thou art more—thou art our Father; and all that is dear and trusting in the world belongs to thee. Thou art our personal Friend, and no other friend is like unto thee; none so perfectly understands; none so enters into every want, and beholds our infirmity and sin, and waits with such infinite patience, with such brotherly kindness, and with such all-healing love, as thou dost. Thou art the soul's Medicine. Thou art He that loves to save; and thou art perpetually healing men by the power of thy sympathy, and by the outflow of thy goodness, and asking to be admitted more and more into hearts that seem barren; but thou comest into barren hearts, even as the rain comes upon barren sands, to bring fruits and flowers; and thou dost rejoice more than the husbandman from whose labor springs an abundant harvest. We rejoice that thou art, above all others, the One that is ever wakeful, ever laborious, ever caretaking, ever burden-bearing, enduring to the very end; and that there are none who do not rest more than thou dost. We rejoice though we cannot compass the conception of thy being nor the thought of such things as thou art doing, nor reach up unto thee. We look in the direction in which thou art supreme in government and in love, and rejoice as we draw nearer and nearer to thy nature, so that it breaks upon us with more and more intelligence, and with better and better refreshment of soul.

Now, O Lord, we pray, not so much for the forgiveness of our sins, as for the supply of those things for which we need to implead thee. We pray not so much for the bounties of Providence, as if only upon petition thou wouldst give forth the morning sun and the blessings of every hour, as for inward mercies. We do beseech of thee that thy goodness may at last so ripen love and gratitude in us that we shall be somewhat worthy of thy companionship, and shall not walk in continual humiliation; in continual thought of our selfishness and waywardness and worldliness.

Grant, O Lord, that we may have, if not the assurance of kingship, yet some of its tokens. We are the sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be; we walk in disguise; yet grant that there may be some such sense of our nearness to thee, and some such sense of our relationships to thy thorough love, that our hearts shall grow strong and glad, and that our lives shall overflow with bounteous and willing service to thee through our fellow-men. For how can we reach thee? What song of ours can be heard beneath the musical roll of those who sing around about thy throne in the heavenly land? Who of us can give thee anything, from whom comes all bounty? What thought can serve thee? What affection can be as incense unto

thee? But we can serve thee by loving one another, by exercising patience with each other; by forgiving one another; by bearing and forbearing; by being to each other as Christ is to us. So may we serve thee.

We bless thy name, O Jesus, that thou hast been pleased to say, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me. Though we cannot reach to the height of thy glory to do anything for thee, nor to place upon thy head any crown, we rejoice to believe that all the things which we do to benefit our fellow men around about us upon earth are accepted at thine hand as if they were done to thee. We beseech of thee that more and more thou wilt make us to feel it. We *do* feel it; for who can bless us as much as they who bless our friends? Who can grant us any favor like that which they grant who succor our children or our dearly beloved ones?

And now, we thank thee for the mercies of this day; for the privilege and the pleasure of the sanctuary. We pray that we may be guided through all the way upon which we have entered, by thy providence, and by thy personal presence, that we may have that peace which passeth all understanding; that we may dwell as beneath the shadow of thy wing, where no storm shall rise to reach us; and that we may abide in the strength of the Father.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all who have come up hither to-night. Look thou into their hearts. Bring peace to those who are troubled, and strength to those who are weak, and hope to those who are discouraged. We beseech of thee that thou wilt give to every one succor according to his need, and according to thine understanding of that need.

And so wilt thou deal graciously and bountifully with thy servants every one. If there be those in thy presence who have not been accustomed to draw the joy of their life from thy life; if there be those who have had tokens of thy presence, and yet have not recognized nor known thee, we pray that their eyes may be opened, that their hearts may be made sensitive to the divine presence, and that they may find in the newness of life strength and gladness such as has never yet visited them.

We pray that thy blessing may rest upon all whom we love—upon our friends everywhere; upon those whom we have worked with in the Gospel; upon all those who need our supplications; upon the poor and the outcast. We pray for those whom men forget, or remember only to punish; we pray for the vicious; we pray for those who are bound to crime; and we beseech of thee that they may all find rescue. May there be saviors raised up even for those who have gone to the uttermost from virtue and from truth. And let that kingdom speedily come from which shall be banished wrath, and hatred, and all malice—that kingdom in which dwelleth peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

And to thy name, Father, Son and Spirit, shall be the praise forever. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

GRANT unto us, our Heavenly Father, the light of thy truth more and more perfectly, that we may understand the largeness of thy revelation, and thy purpose in men; that we may rejoice not in the limitations of a poorly interpreted letter, but in the largeness of the Spirit. Grant, we pray thee, that we may be delivered from servile fear; from all chains which we wear because we think we must, though they do not help us. Grant that we may know how to break away from the bondage of conventions that bind without benefiting.

We pray that we may learn to live so that our labor shall not be a stumbling-block to others; so that in the royalty of intelligence, and yet in the gentleness of motherly affection, we may know how to possess our full strength and knowledge, and take care of the weak as tender babes, and rear them to the fullness of knowledge which shall enable them to be as we are. So may we learn, in this new school, in this divine court of love, all wisdom, all justice, all truth, all practical life; and when we have finished that part of our education which belongs to this world, be pleased, O thou Lover that lovest us more than we love ourselves, to take us to thyself, where we shall see thee as thou art, and rejoice and be satisfied because we shall be like thee.

And to thy name shall be the praise forever and ever. *Amen.*

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